

This is a rough transcript of the Listen & Be Heard Hour for Readers & Writers, Season 4 Episode 5. All contents are ©2026 Listen & Be Heard Network, and/or the author of the work that was read and may not be reprinted, distributed or used in any way without express permission from the copyright holder.

Welcome to the Audio Garden, where we cultivate our collective wisdom,  
nurture creativity, and spread love. My name is Martha Cinader,  
and this is Listen and Be Heard. Listen and be heard.

Why not? You're all meant to shine como las ciencias, las ciencias en cada una de  
las fases, cada uno de los documentos individuales. Diferentes, rostros,  
veces, no hay más veces que descansar. Ya que te he visto un año, te he hecho  
decir que es lo que es. Así que, escucha y escuche. las engras son como dos en  
esta tierra desgraciada con My piece Del Mar,

of the mar, with art with art to be a bland in a man, I'm like this my man has  
a trilogy because whenever I think a trilogy you know I'm thinking I'm Frazier  
Graziano Zelle Ward Gadi you know I'm thinking you know I can freeze right could I  
sell and then I have How into my inner ears and vibrates through my inner plane,  
my biosphere? To each cell in my body, can you feel me?

Can you feel me as we are more ancient than the vibrating words that you are  
speaking? Receive me, reflect me, reflect me through the night.

Be galactic stars, be that strove light that leads me home or the lighthouse guiding  
the way through the dark waves of the ocean alone in a boat we floating commanding  
demanding and expanding and creating

welcome back to the audio garden my friends it is so good to be here with you,  
as always. And today, I get to welcome Tony Cranston all the way from London,  
host of Talking Stories Radio. And we're going to be hearing some new music,  
as always. But first, let's hear a poem from Anna Castro Spratt.

when I met my doppelganger. She had long brown hair that I had never learned to  
love until I braided it from behind, watched the way it creased down her spine like

it never had in the mirror. I took her to the jazz club down the street where we met our first boyfriend so I could experience the velvet tunes for the first time again, observed how her fingers tapped at the hips of her skinny jeans that I hadn't worn since middle school. But now I loved the denim, how it followed our curves in a way my own dresses didn't. And for the first time, I thought, I loved a woman. In the summer we drove to the dull lakes, to the cliffs I'd been too afraid to jump from, but told her I used to easily, so I could watch her from below, the way our body hit the water painlessly and sunk below the pond's skin. We watched a map turn blue and red in the fall. We turned to each other and talked politics, who we'd cast one ballot for, even though it was no discussion. Being one, we repeated and nodded until we were just one voice. And I realized that was all we loved, hearing the sounds of our own voices, rattling inside each other's bones, spitting images back and forth. Thank you, Anna Castro Spratt, who was the Youth Poet Laureate of Greenville, South Carolina, back in season two. Here comes Tony at the Garden Gate.

Tony Cranston, welcome to the audio garden. I'm so happy to have you here. Oh, I'm so happy to be on the show my first time and all the way from London. Please tell our audience about your radio show. The program is called Talking Stories. It's on East London Radio. Go through Mix Cloud, Talking Stories, East London Radio. You'll find it somewhere on the internet. It's available as a radio show first, then it goes out as a podcast. Why a storytelling show? I was in East London radio on a program being interviewed about being a yoga teacher. I was wearing storytelling t-shirt, so they asked me about it. And I told them, and then next minute they said, would you like to do a program for us all about storytelling? So naturally everybody, I have to say yes and worry about it later. They were asking me how I became a storyteller in the first place and why I was always interested in stories.

My parents were the obvious influence and telling stories. Like my mom would say, don't call me mother. I'm not your mother. I didn't give birth to you. I found you in a box behind Woolworths. And did you grow up in London? No, I grew up in the northeast of England, near Newcastle and Durham, if you ever look it up on the map. Up there, I was a magazine editor. The magazine was run by teenagers as I was the editor and producer and director and everything about it. I had the choice of interviewing whoever I wanted. One of them was Robin Williamson. Now, I don't know if you can remember a band from England years ago, a folk group called The Incredible String Band. English folk group who were played at Woodstock. I had the choice of reviewing Robin Williamson in a theatre in Northumberland after his show. He was now a storyteller. I was a nothing by this time. I can't sing. I couldn't dance. I can't play a musical instrument. But on the magazine side, I was surrounded by musicians and artists and dancers and painters and singers and singers and all kinds of people. I couldn't do any of those things. But I saw his show where he played a harp and he told stories and he sang a couple of songs and played more harp and told these stories. And afterwards he said, when he tells a story, it's his story. But then if I was to go off and tell it with my tone of voice, maybe something I've added or missed out or something I've emphasized, that's my story. But it's only my story until I've told it to someone, and they go off and tell it to someone else. We're only temporary custodians of stories, and I thought, that's it. I can tell stories, and that was 1991, and I've traveled to 74 towns of cities outside the UK to tell stories. Are there particular themes that you keep returning to? I do tell a lot of Chinese stories. Since 1993, I've been going back and forth to China, working at the Children's Palace. China has always been a thing for me. Again, my mom would tell you the story of how I ran away when I was four years old. Packed my bag, slammed the door and say, right, I'm running away to

China. And I got as far away as the end of the street and crossed the road all by myself. And she'd never come to get me, you know? I had to talk to a stranger and you know you're not allowed to talk to strangers. I said, please go and get my mummy. I tell her I haven't got very far yet. She can catch me before I go to China. I didn't know. She was looking out the kitchen window, of course. I got there when I was 37. After writing a Chinese story, a folk tale about a dragon, after I wrote this story and they published it worldwide. I thought, hmm, I must be able to write too. So the storytelling extended into writing. And you've extended the show. It's not just you telling stories. Tell people a little more about what you present on the show. Well, we'd like to hear stories from all over the world because we get to know each other's culture and people and who they are by listening to their stories. That's what we've always done. Our brains are hardwired for stories. We learn everything through stories. It's nice just to hear an Indian voice telling an Indian story, a Chinese story from a Chinese person, an Australian story from an Australian, and put them all on the show, and I like to mix them up. Longer story, short stories. Occasionally we do specials. But it's just so good to hear how have saved the world hearing me from a lady storyteller in Assam when you learn those stories yourself you're beginning to speak like them and you could say stories in their tones and in their voices and sounds makes you a great storyteller I like every kind of story and I don't think I could listen to one story and then another one in a similar field and another one in a similar field, strength after each other. I'd like to have different voices and different people telling different stories. And I tried to do that on the show. You know, all those traditional stories, what we hear are the versions of the stories that were printed 100 years ago, 150 years ago. But what we don't hear are the stories that were there before that one was actually printed. The Grim Brothers are

a great example from this. Yes. Yeah, the Grim brothers had all of those stories printed, but their editor really changed them before he did publish them. And a lot of those were based actually on pre-Christian stories. We're early days, yes. But they didn't tell it that way. It was their editor that told it, their publisher that told it. This is The Listen and Beheard Hour brought to you by the Listen and Be Heard Network. All of our archives are available at [listenandbeheard.net](http://listenandbeheard.net). Coming up in the second half hour, new music and poetry picked fresh for you here in the audio garden. But right now, a story from Tony Cranston.

I'd like to tell you the very first story I ever wrote, and it was published worldwide, seven world languages, that's Portuguese, Spanish, English, Chinese, Braille, Arabic, and so on. I was so surprised that I could actually write a story and be so successful with it in one go. It's called a Dragon's Wish. Long, long ago, in old China, there lived a little girl called Mei. Now, Mei means pretty, but this little girl was called Mei-Mei, because she was twice pretty. She was pretty on the outside, but she was also pretty on the inside where it counted the most. She had a good heart. Now, Mei lived with her granddad who was called Lao Nan. Now, Nan means man, and Lao means old.

So his name was old man. It's quite a nice name in Chinese for a granddad. And they lived in the house in a little village and we were very happy, but Lao Nan now couldn't work in the fields anymore, but he was still very, very skillful with his fingers, and he could mend clothing, he could make dragons and phoenixes for weddings, he could... And do all kinds of things on silk costumes for weddings, and they painted for it. Thank you.

Please leave me, what am I doing? Oh, and I hurt anybody. And somebody laughing, oh, oh, oh, oh, and whack, whack. And she saw, what's going on here?

What's going on? Being a clever, smart little girl, Mei hid behind the trees and

looked out. And she saw these big men with hairy chest with big earrings sticking out in their ears. And they were laughing. And they... You know what they did?

They had a baby dragon. They caught it, tied it up onto the ground, and they were beating it with sticks. I just laughing. And the dragon was calling out. And please, Linilone, I haven't hurt you. I haven't done anything. I'm just a baby dragon. But they just laughed and laughed and beat the

And Mae Mae was so, so, so sorry for the dragon. But what could she do?

She's just a little girl, and they were big pirates, banged. She did not know what to do.

Then she had an idea. She untied the parcel, took out the costume of the goddess Guanian, and stood up on a rock where everybody could see her, and in the Bigger's loudest voice she could muster for a little girl, she's pointed, said, Leave that dragon alone.

And the bandits turned around to see, who would dare?

Who dare speak to them in such a fashion? But when they looked and they saw standing on the rock they saw the goddess Guan Yin and said oh my goodness everybody look at it's the goddess Guan Yin we'd be in trouble now please drive your things and run and so they all ran up because they were bullies and you know bullies are just cowards and they were scared and they ran off and quickly Me -May climbed down from the rock and untied the dragon and that dragon was so thankful And he said, Me, May, I know who you are. I know why they call you May, and because you have a good heart, I'm going to give you three wishes. What would you wish for? But she said straight away, oh, I want lots and lots and lots and lots of money. And so, all of a sudden, the drag waved his claws, and in front of her were bags and bags of gold and silver coins. Then she said, hmm, right, I want some diamond rings and I want a crown and I want jewelry and

bracelets and necklaces. And straight away the dragon waved his claw and she was covered in jewelry and a crown. And for a third wish, she asked for a big house to be built at the end of the village for her and allowed her to live in. And the dragon pointed and said, go back home and you will find your granddad and your home. So they went back and the granddad was standing outside the door of his new home. And they lived happily ever after

until one day somebody in the village began to get the sniffles.

Then they had to sneeze. And they felt all shimmery and cold.

And they were aching and they went to bed to try to get better. But they never did get better. You all just died. Someone else got the sniffles felt cold and chilly and they went to bed to try to get better and never woke up again. Auntie's uncles, babies, children, brothers, sisters, cousins, young and old, all little by little got the snivellus and called and went to bed.

May May spent all her money to bring doctors from far and wide, but nobody could find anything. She sold all her jewels and her crown to bring more doctors, but nobody could find a cure.

And then one day,

Launan got the sniffles. And he felt cold and shivering.

And he went to bed to try to get warm.

And Mimi said,

Oh no.

Oh Not now, nan. Not my granddad. No.

I've only, if only I had those three wishes again. And somebody way above the clouds heard her and the dragon appeared again and said,

Mamie, I know what's happening. Because you're a good girl and you have a good heart, I'm going to give you those three wishes again. Now what would you wish for?

And May May knew, money and jewels were no good. And it came to it. So she said,  
I wish that this plague, this disease will go away. I'd never come back again so  
no one would be ill. And the dragon said, so be albeit,  
and it never came again.

But Mamay thought, what about all the people who died? And now now it was ill,  
can they all be better and can they come back again?

And the dragon slowly pointed his claw up to the hill, to the graveyard. And all  
these aunties and uncles and brothers and sisters and young and old came down the  
hill. They were all alive again, and everybody hugged and kissed each other, and  
there was a great big celebration all day. But she still had one wish left,  
and she didn't know what to wish for. She thought and thought, money's no good,  
jewels are now good. She thought and thought, and then she thought, I know,  
I'm going to give you, Mr. Dragon, that wish. The dragon was so surprised.

He'd never had a wish before. He never thought of it before. Everybody just took  
their three wishes and used to him. He'd never been given one back before. He  
didn't know what to do with it. He thought and thought and thought and thought. And  
then he said, I know what I wish for. I wish that from now on all us young  
dragons can disguise ourselves as little boys and girls like you so that no one  
will ever see us again as a dragon and be able to capture us and beat us up  
again. And that, boys and girls,

is why dragons are not seen to this day because they're all disguised as little  
boys and girls like you. Maybe even going to your school, How would you know?  
And now? Thank you, Tony. I'm going to have to look with different eyes now and  
listen with different ears. Oh, you don't get you to say, I think I know a dragon.

And they probably do. I was recently at the Museum of the City of New York,  
and I went there to hear a Lenape storyteller, who were the original inhabitants



before New York became New York. And he took the position that everybody should know their origin story. And I wonder how much that comes up. As you listen to stories and storytellers, how many of those storytellers are telling origin stories. Oh, quite a lot, really. We've had some Native American stories. The original, how the world was created, all those stories. We also had stories of how they moved into this particular land from another land. The Toshone creation story is very much a biblical story. They call them the grandfather instead of God. The same thing to me. And created the land, created the people, created the trees and animals. Then he created the people after it. First, one man, one woman. It's the same story. I hear a lot of stories about how people moved from China or the borders of China and moved right through Asia. It took several hundred years to do it and became the Franks and Goths that we now know in Germany and France. I like the myths, I like how there's so many connections in all the stories and so many cultures have got the same kind of story told in their fashion the flood stories know we're in the flood but we also know the gilgamesh story which came hundreds of years earlier but there was an indian story way beyond that when god came as a fish and saved everybody and then it's a chinese story way beyond that too where the gods told them how the flood was coming you should build these dikes and should build these dams and build these canals and walks of water out the way. Same story. And it's interesting how people say, that's the original story. And I thought, is it? The original original. And all of those stories, so hundreds of years ago, still resonate and have meanings and think to us these days. I think that's why we'd like them. There must be tens of thousands of storytellers around the world and tens of thousands of people listening to those stories. Thank you so much, Tony Cranston. And one more time, please tell our listening audience how they can find your Talking Stories Radio program and more about you. Okay,

please do. You can find us on Facebook, Talking Stories Radio, or find me, Tony Cranston on Facebook. My email, Toto, T -O -T -O -T -O -C Cranston, I said Cranston, Rhode Island, C -R -A -N -F -T -O -N, which I performed there many time at hotmail .com. We like your stories, just send them into us. It's all free. The program's free. You listen to it free. You can listen to it day or night. The big addresses mixcloud .com talking stories, East London Radio. Thank you so much for joining me today, Tony. Hey, it's been good. Once it's heard, it can't be unheard. Once it's published, it's not going to be unpublished. Once you read the poem, you can't unread it. No matter how an individual may try to push it to the side, get about it, it's still in there. And it's the words, the meaning, the feelings behind it are taking root in their psyche and they can't get rid of it.

All TV shows, old books, they're all being edited and everything is changing in that sense, not changing that they don't like this book anymore and you can't read it anymore, it's banned. You know, you can't get that book anymore. By the way, you'll get most of those books from France anyways. It doesn't matter too much. An English band doesn't stop it in France. It's more like censorship in the books.

They are changing the language in the books. It's got to be more inclusive, more... And that's very difficult for old folk tales. That's for certain. I don't know my story. What is your story? It's not that I don't care. It's just that I don't know where I am from. Where are you from? I have my father's name, but he's not from where my mother is from, or even from where he's from, which is the Bronx. But he would never have you know. But I would rather trace my lineage through my mother, which still and even though she would have you know nothing about me and never told me my story, except that she would have me know I took too long to arrive and she survived. I killed her love for me. Now there's an origin story.

But her mother's mothers came from Free Slum, I think. And because her hair, my mother's hair was platinum and her eyebrows, too, I prefer to think we go all the way back to the original free side before the Romans came and resettled the Germanic people there. And because she comes, I come, we come from the Western Frisians on the now Dutch side. And so I imagine my foremother telling me a story of how she swam out of the sea. Mermaids will be singing siren songs that were never meant to be construed as an invitation to anything but an origin story of the soul where it is mostly called and white and

I'm still working on listening. But definitely, I kind of talk a little quiet.

So even when I'm wanting to be heard, you know, some people will be like, huh? And I'll be trying to get my message across, but it's like, so it kind of sucks.

I'm working on both.

I think within this context specifically is that the disconnect from the historical piece of the whole picture, right, like the disconnect of, for me, as a tap dancer coming in and having to kind of prove myself, whereas the art form started with tap dancers involved as the process, so trying to...

Rodriguez, Sierra. And also, at the start of the show, we heard from Greenville's youth poet laureate at the time of season two of the listening to be heard hour. Her name is Anna Castro Spratt. And coming up towards the end of the show, we'll hear from the adult poet laureate at the time. I think she might still be, Glenys Redmond. Listen and Be Heard is brought to you by the Listen and Be Heard Network, which is a project of Sound System Culture Inc.

It's a free program available on educational community radio stations around the country and as a podcast, entirely commercial free, at least if you come and listen to it at Listen and Beheard .net, but it's

available wherever you like to listen to podcasts. You can make a tax deductible donation to sound system culture to support the production of this show.

By visiting listen and beheard .net, you can learn more about Sound System Culture by visiting sound systemculture .world. Please stick around, listen to the sounds of the audio garden and we'll meet you on the other side of the bridge in about a minute.

Okay, listen and be heard. For to be heard is to listen.

The music. So today's feature is going to be really great. It's a Burke's jazz festival of Jason Miles. A keyboard is producer. The board is for Miles' band. Jason Miles and Ingrid Jensen on trumpet. Buster Hample on bass.

Mike Clark on drums. Leo Nelueke on guitar. The great Joe Livano on tenor saxophone.

And myself on bass clarinet and this next piece is called the eye of the storm all right enjoy you know you only get to hear the stuff here all right support sound system culture dot ink

Thank you.

Okay.

I'm sorry, Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

I I don't know.

Thank you. Thank you.

Let's

Thank you.

This is The Listen and Beheard Hour, brought to you by the Listen and Beheard Network. All of our archives are available at listen and beheard .net.

We have a sister show called Beyond Borders, and this is the voice of Olga Kavron,

who is our featured guest on that show right now. I'm sorry to say that you guys are on your own pretty much on this one because the U.S. has established itself as such a superpower over time, right? It's almost like, you know, you've got a bully in the house who's the strongest one of all who's going to rein him in. I don't see anybody else apart from the American people who can really reign this in. Now, some people will say that what's happening with the administration is obviously a reflection of what's happened in society. The way I see it, then this may be very, I mean, it's likely to be very controversial and feel free to even remove it if necessary. I see all of what's happening as the last throes of an archaic, patriarchal, white supremacist with toxic masculinity combination. But I think all of that is dying, and these are the last throes of a dying animal. And we all know that these are sometimes the most difficult to spread. In desperate times, because that dying animal will fight and will fight to the death because it's dying. I see there's a process that inevitably, when I say dying animal, I just mean the things that should have died a long time ago, like white supremacy, toxic masculinity, very precise about that concerns that should concern you as a human being living in that environment. And so you decide to put that into your art and sometimes it's difficult to do that by relying simply on aesthetic concern. What does it mean to say you politicize your art? In my novel I posit that this artist who previously had made only color abstractions suddenly turned to painting figurative art because it was more direct for him to convey anti-tirony messages by painting figures.

The poem that I'm going to read is called Forefather for David Drake.

When the landscape does not bear black blooms, I reach my arms back for one.

Who flares with instruction. Read what he wrote on Edgeville Pots.

This a noble churn, fill it up and it'll never turn. From my childhood home,

a mere 73 miles ragged stretch from Piedmont to Edgeville separates us.

I make him out through 155 years through the muck and the fog of pale deceit.

I let my fingers touch the clay brilliance. See him a solid figure,

a South Carolina son, a literary father with no daguerre Degyrotite. I conjure his  
visage in both bursts and vessel through the worlds of his fingertips.

I walk along the loops and ridges, sit between the lines of his etched couplets,  
press ear to the hum of hardened clay. Hear him say,

empty yourself. cry these tight spaces open listen to the mountains and valleys i  
withstood the idea that they have anything to write that's the biggest thing and i  
can't tell you how many times i cry when i'm watching them read because it's so  
moving to see a just good emotional just thinking about it they come in and they  
say mean things about themselves and I say, you know what, this is a space where  
we're going to just try to be gentle, try to accept ourselves as we are, and we're  
only going to comment on the strengths of the writing. Because that's all you need  
to know about is what's working. And they are very resistant. A lot of times they  
have trouble getting started. There's a way I work around that. But once they write  
something, it's always amazing. I've never heard anyone write something in any of my  
classes that didn't inspire me, move me, make me cry, make me laugh, make me feel  
deeply. That was the voice of Elizabeth Perlman, our friend here in the audio  
garden, who is the founder of the intuitive writing project,  
and you might remember that we have featured snippets of the writings of the young  
women who she has worked with through that project. But she's also the author of a  
new book, Word Magic, which is based on her work with the Intuitive Writing Project,  
and we'll be featuring her here next week in the Audio Garden.

Before Elizabeth, we heard the poet, Glenys Redmond, and she was talking about the  
potter, David rake. And some of his precious pots are actually featured in the Free

Museum, the Greenville County Museum of Art in Greenville, South Carolina. And there's a beautiful book attached to this project that Glenys was involved in with beautiful illustrations and poetry. Look in our archives, season two of the Listen and Be Heard Hour, the Poet Laureate of Greenville, South Carolina, Glenys Redmond. We interviewed Glenys Redmond twice. I did an interview with her and Anna Spratt, which I do believe is available also as a video on our video page or our YouTube channel, but originally my co -host Tony Robles brought Glenys Redmond to the Listen and Be Heard Hour. So if you search her name in the archives, you'll come up with a few interviews and books as well. We also heard the voice of Eileen Tabios, who is the author of the Ballybion artist. Eileen is an active member of the Listening Beheard Network. She's visited us more than once and participated in a panel as well, and other publishers and bookstore owners about the demise of small press distribution, which is a topic that might be ripe for us to revisit even in the midst of everything else that is going on. And we heard Olga Kavran, who we are featuring this week and next week on Beyond Borders, which I co -host and co -produce with Judy Tologan and Ernan. Olga is the founder of Eustacombe and an expert on international law. We have two new interns here at the Listening BeHeard Network who I want to welcome. They're seniors in their last semester of high school, Micah and Javier. And you can look forward to hearing Micah and Javier on the microphone and behind the microphone in various ways too. As the semester progresses, the internship progresses, and the network keeps growing and reaching out to make connections between people and generations. I want to thank our guest all the way from London, Tony Cranston, the host of Talking Stories Radio. You'll find the links to all of everything that he has going on as well for this

season four, episode five of the Listen and Be Heard Hour.

It's cold, and I have not been in my garden.

I've been looking at it through my window at about eight inches of snow.

And honestly, I just don't have much to say about gardening today.

But I'm going to leave you with the wise words of Meredith Lee,

author of the Ethical Mead Handbook. Just something to consider as we all work towards regional resilience.

I have been invited to become the at times controversial.

or because this food system that we're beholden to separates us from the concepts of death, right, that happen in order for food to be available to us? Thanks as always

to Daveyne Dial at WPVM Radio in Asheville, North Carolina,

for introducing listen to be heard to the broadcast airwaves, KCEI in Touse,

New Mexico, KEPJ in San Antonio, Texas, K -H -O -I in Ames,

Iowa, and K -F -O -I in Red Bluff, California, and other stations that are part of

the Pacifica affiliate network for cultivating the audio garden in your communities and our own Listen and Beheard Network, host of WLVH .org.

Please visit us at Listen and beheard .net and sign up for our email newsletter and

at our Listen and Beheard YouTube channel, where you will find unedited video

interviews of our featured guests. My name is Martha Cinader, and I want to thank you for listening and giving me the opportunity to be heard.